

Archibald First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108438
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	337074
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Bell
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Bayes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 87 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- children's skills on entry and the progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the progress of pupils from backgrounds that are not White British or who speak English as an additional language
- the quality of leadership and management.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average first school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. About one quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic families and about one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The school has achieved the Becta information and communication technology (ICT) award. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children begin in the Nursery class in the September of the school year in which they reach their fourth birthday. They commence full-time education in the autumn term of their Reception Year. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Archibald First School is a good school where pupils from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds flourish together and where pupils who speak English as an additional language make exceptional progress. Good care and support ensure that pupils' well-being, personal development and behaviour are promoted well. As a result, pupils are happy, feel safe and know how to stay healthy. Pupils' attainment is above average because initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, to make the curriculum more interesting and to offer more opportunities for pupils to write have had a positive impact on standards, although writing remains a weaker aspect of pupils' attainment, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While teaching is good overall, it does not promote progress effectively enough in some classes where there are too few opportunities for practical and investigative activities or for more-able writers to develop their ideas at length. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and how it supports pupils' social and moral development. However, they would appreciate more regular information about pupils' progress and homework and about how they can help their children to learn at home. Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance is satisfactory because too many pupils take holidays during term time.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in all subjects and the percentage of pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 is above average. Standards are above expectations at the end of Year 4 and there is an overall trend of improvement in the school.

The headteacher has quickly established strong relationships with the highly effective deputy headteacher and together they are refining the strategies that have already been successful in raising attainment in the school. They have distributed more responsibility for monitoring lessons and analysing data to middle leaders who are relishing the increased accountability. Leaders at all levels have a clear view of what needs to be done to ensure that the school improves even further. Given the good outcomes for pupils and the success of the school's strategies for improving standards, the school's capacity to improve is good and it provides good value for money.

Pupils say that teachers help them so that they know how to improve their work, although some older pupils say they would benefit from knowing the level of their work. Pupils have a developing influence on what happens in school. They have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures and of the multicultural make-up of modern British society, though they have a more limited view of life in other countries.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment in writing, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders and teachers make better use of assessment information when reviewing progress and when planning writing activities for individuals
 - offering the most able writers more opportunities to write at length.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by:
 - sharing the practices that make teaching effective in the best lessons
 - further developing the range of those learning activities that offer pupils opportunities for practical and investigative activities so that pupils are involved and challenged in more lessons.
- Improve communication with parents and carers so that they have more frequent information about how well their children are progressing, about homework and about how they can support their children's learning at home.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is good. Pupils behave very well, have good attitudes and relationships in lessons and show great keenness to do well in their work. They enjoy their learning, especially when they are involved in lively activities such as using information and communication technology to make animations, to write newspapers and to carry out research about rainforests.

Achievement has been good in Key Stage 1 in recent years, so that from starting points which have been average in English and mathematics, pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Attainment at the end of Year 4 is above expectations and pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4. Attainment has risen in both key stages because of improvements to teaching which ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils also show good achievement in sport, the arts and ICT, where they showed great skill in producing an animation about healthy eating. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and show good progress and achievement. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make exceptional progress as a result of highly effective support and teaching.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement in sporting activities and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They care for one another well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils willingly take on roles as monitors and school council members. However, they make only a limited contribution to the school community because, although the school council has recently been given more responsibility, its suggestions to improve the school environment have still to be implemented. There are satisfactory links in the local area through a range of charities, participation in performances and activities with older residents and with the local churches. Pupils from different faiths and cultures work very

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well together so that their understanding of different faiths and of the multicultural make-up of modern British society is well developed. Their understanding of life in other parts of the world is more limited. Despite below average attendance, they are equipped well for their future economic well-being because they have very good skills in working collaboratively, above average basic skills in English and mathematics and great confidence in the use of ICT.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching, based on strong subject knowledge and positive relationships, is a central feature of the school and contributes to the good progress pupils make. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They use questions very well to ascertain what pupils already know, check what they have learnt as the lesson progresses and skilfully adapt lessons to advance learning. Marking is well done so that pupils are clear about what they have achieved and know what they have to do to improve further. Lessons are well planned so that pupils are given opportunities to learn through practical and investigative activities.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Teachers use modelling, discussion, investigation and interactive whiteboard technology to engage pupils and to stimulate their thinking, for example when a teacher was helping pupils to plan their writing about Jack and the beanstalk. Occasionally, there is too much teacher direction and not enough opportunity for pupils to get on with their work, either independently or with their friends.

The curriculum has contributed to rising standards by offering pupils a wide range of challenging and creative activities which are increasingly well matched to their interests and abilities. It helps pupils to see the links between subjects and offers them many opportunities to apply their ICT skills and to write at length in subjects other than English. While this has contributed to pupils' developing expertise as writers, standards in writing remain lower than in other subjects, as occasionally pupils spend more time discussing writing strategies than applying them. There is a strong focus on learning about religious education which is supported by visits to churches, mosques and Hindu temples. All pupils from Year 1 to Year 4 learn German, Italian or French; they enjoy physical education, singing and playing a musical instrument. The school provides many activities which enrich pupils' learning. For example, they enjoy performances by theatre groups and their own visits to places such as Beamish Museum, and the Winter Gardens to study about rainforests. However, there are too few opportunities for them to participate in enterprise activities or explore the world of work. They participate enthusiastically and successfully in a range of extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts.

Developing all pupils' self-esteem, respect for others and sense of responsibility is central to the school's work and is reflected well in the day-to-day life of the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for looked after children and for pupils whose first language is not English is well managed and there are effective programmes for intervention and support so that these pupils make good and often exceptional progress. There are well-established practices to involve parents and carers when their children enter school and good procedures as pupils move through school. However, strategies for informing pupils and their parents and carers about pupils' move to middle school are less successful in preparing pupils for the next phase of their education. The school identifies those pupils who are persistent absentees and works closely with families and through the local authority to encourage better attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have a clear view of what needs to be done to make the school even better. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum have already brought about a rise in standards and there are detailed and appropriate priorities to effect further improvements in teaching, standards in writing and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school knows itself well and plans for improvement are clearly delineated in the school's development plan, which is monitored regularly and to which all staff and governors contribute. There is a well-organised programme of continuing professional development which uses the skills of staff in school to coach less experienced colleagues, as well as working closely with the local authority to advance the school's improvement. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and has close links with outside agencies to support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds and those with autism, showing the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. Governors offer strong support and have become more rigorous in offering challenge to the school and in monitoring its work. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and there are good procedures to ensure their safety. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures because the school actively celebrates the rich diversity of its population.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Children start in the Nursery with skills and personal attributes that are typical for their age, although early literacy skills and some aspects of numeracy are less well developed. By the time children start Year 1 standards are broadly at the level expected, except in writing. A minority of children speak English as an additional language but make particularly good progress in the development of their communication skills. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in learning letters and sounds and acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills. Writing, however, is weaker because there are not enough opportunities for children to apply their early writing skills, especially those who speak English as an additional language. Children behave well and quickly learn to share and work together. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear plan for future improvements and has already initiated changes which allow flexibility and more opportunities for children to develop their independence, try new activities and move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. Activities in the Reception classes are well planned and staff are very clear about what they expect children to learn and how to assess their learning. In the Nursery planning is a little less well developed because it focuses on activities rather than skills. Adults work well together to provide a welcoming, safe and secure learning environment. Partnerships with parents and carers are good; for example curriculum workshops and 'You and Me' home-school booklets are helpful in showing parents and carers how to help their children at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A total of 87 parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and analysis showed that support for the school is very strong. Most parents and carers support the work of the school and the way it helps pupils to feel safe, be healthy and enjoy their learning. They comment especially upon the way children are encouraged to respect one another and the range of activities offered to pupils. Parents and carers are also strongly supportive of the new headteacher and the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. However, a few indicated that they believed the school could give more information about pupils' progress and the way parents and carers can help pupils at home, especially through a more consistent approach to homework. Inspectors agree that these are areas for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Archibald First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	64	28	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	59	31	37	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	23	48	58	13	16	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	41	43	52	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	32	39	48	58	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	39	40	48	11	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	39	47	57	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	28	40	48	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	40	45	54	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	39	43	52	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	33	41	49	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	34	44	53	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	52	37	45	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Archibald First School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1EB

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school recently.

You go to a good school which knows what to do to make itself even better. The staff care for you very well. Teachers help you learn well and tell you clearly how to improve your work. The team was impressed by the pride you take in your work, how hard you work in lessons and by your ICT skills. We particularly enjoyed your Christmas performances and the pleasure you took in them. You behave well, show respect for one another and look after one another admirably. You are polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and sports activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

I have asked your teachers to do the following things to help your school to improve.

- Help you to reach higher standards in writing by giving you even more opportunities to write at length.
- Make sure that all your lessons are as exciting and involve you as much in your learning as the very best lessons in the school.
- Let your parents and carers know more often how well you are doing and how they can help you to learn at home.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by improving your attendance. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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